

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 292120Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8735

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 6001

FROM ROCAP

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECIN,PORG, GT, CR, HO, ES, NU

SUBJ: MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS-FERTICA ITEM
ON AGENDA

REF: SAN JOSE 4377

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL LIAISON
COMMITTEE (COMITE DE ENLACE) FOR THE FERTICA
QUESTION HAS APPROACHED THE C A TECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ICAITI) TO EXPLORE THE
POSSIBILITY OF A TECHNICAL STUDY TO DETERMINE THE
COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED PURCHASE OF
FERTICA. THE STUDY WOULD BE USED BY THE LIAISON
COMMITTEE AS PART OF ITS BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE C A PRESIDENTS.

2. REPORTEDLY, THE HONDURAN MEMBER OF THE LIAISON
COMMITTEE PRESSED FOR A THOROUGH, EXHAUSTIVE STUDY.
CONTRARIWISE, THE NICARAGUAN AND THE COSTA RICAN
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MEMBERS PREFERRED AN EXPEDITIOUS, EVEN IF LESS

PROFOUND, STUDY. THE GUATEMALAN AND THE SALVADORAN
WERE NON-COMMITTAL.

3. A HIGH OFFICIAL OF ICAITI TOLD US IT WOULD BE
UNFORTUNATE IF ICAITI WERE TO GET INTO THIS AFFAIR.
ICAITI IS ENTIRELY CAPABLE, TECHNICALLY, BUT THE
QUESTION APPEARS TO BE MORE POLITICAL THAN TECHNICAL.
HE SIAD. CA GOVERNMENTS COULD USE THE TECHNICAL
REPORT TO JUSTIFY THEIR POLITICAL POSITIONS. THIS
COULD DAMAGE ICAITI WHICH, IN SPITE OF ITS
DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITIES, HAS THE PROBLEM OF
SATISFYING FIVE MASTERS, TO WIT, THE FIVE NATIONAL
GOVTS OF CA.

4. NEVERTHELESS, IF IT IS THE FIRM INTENT OF THE
LIAISON COMMITTEE (AND THUS OF THE PRESIDENTS
AND MINECONS), ICAITI WILL HAVE TO DO THE STUDY,
LIKE IT OR NOT.

5. WHY THE FERTICA QUESTION CONTINUES AS A MAJOR
ITEM FOR SUCCESSIVE PRESIDENTIAL SUMMITS IS
SOMTHING OF A MYSTERY. OF COURSE, THE CENTRAL
AMERICANS HAVE REPEATEDLY AFFIRMED THEIR INTENTION
TO FORM TRANSNATIONAL CORPS, AND FERTILIZERS ARE BASIC
TO THE PRIMARY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE
AREA, IE, AGRICULTURE.

6. GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR SEEM COOL TO THE
FERTICA PURCHASE SCHEME, MAINLY BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION
FROM THEIR PRIVATE SECTORS TO STATE-CONTROLLED
ENTERPRISES. HONDURAS APPEARS OPEN-MINDED, WHILE
NICARAGUA AND COSTA RICA HAVE EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST.

7. THE ICAITI OFFICIAL SAID THAT NICARAGUA EXPECTS
TO BE PRODUCING A SURPLUS OF HYDROGEN WITHIN A FEW
YRS, AND PERHAPS IS ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE A READY
MARKET FOR IT THROUGH THE PROPOSED PURCHASE OF
FERTICA. HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON HOW AND WHY
NICARAGUA WOULD ACQUIRE A SURPLUS OF HYDROGEN, NO
THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT COULD BE USED BY FERTICA.
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HARRISON.
ALSO PASSED INFO USAID/GUATEMALA.
MELOY

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